



**Site Visit Programmatic Questions  
Positive Alternatives 2016  
Birthline – May 20, 2016**

**1. Update/ Demographic Reporting**

- Review your two most recently submitted Update/Demographic Reports: are you meeting Report Count Goals?

- Note any significant differences between the reports: are your programs stable? Improving? What do the reports indicate about progress in your programs?

Number of clients has been consistent and well above work plan counts. The more recent work plan projected numbers for clients served were updated to reflect the growing client visit data being recorded. Winter quarterly report client numbers were lower than other quarters yet still within work plan estimates.

- Any questions on the recording of data on either form?

No.

**2. Work Plan**

- Review your 2012-16 grant application's description of the program you requested to be funded. Note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.

Please prepare a **short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.**

Address these topics:

- a. How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing?
- b. Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed?
- c. Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased in the 4th year?
- d. Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

**General Comparison of Application vs. Actual Program Activity:**

Birthline requested funding for the STEPPING STONES Program, (an “earn while you learn” incentive program), and to support our intake/advocacy phase to refer people into the STEPPING STONES (SS) program.

The primary goal of the program is to ensure that all women are given the opportunity to achieve the services necessary to carry their pregnancy to term, and care for their infant after birth.

to term, and care for their infant after birth. The objectives of the program are to support positive pregnancy outcomes; positive life-style choices for the health & wellness of mother and child for the STEPPING STONES Program, (an “earn while you learn” incentive program), and to support our intake/advocacy phase to refer people into the STEPPING STONES (SS) program.

The primary goal of the program is to ensure that all women are given the opportunity to achieve the services necessary to carry their pregnancy; and to increase the opportunity for long term self-sufficiency and family stability. The program is open to women at any stage of pregnancy through one year of age of their infant. However; Birthline does request that an infant be 6 months of age or less when they begin so that we have time to bring them through the entire educational program.

The one-to-one mentoring, classes, activities and material goods that are currently part of the program are designed to meet the intent of the original application.

A few program highlights Birthline has proposed and continue to deliver within the program are as follows:

- The Client Advocate ensures that necessary services are reviewed and discussed with each client.
- The Client Advocate will encourage client participation in the STEPPING STONES program so as to help each client meet their individual needs.
- All SS Program clients’ receive a program manual that includes information on nutrition, the impact of risky behaviors (such as smoking and drinking) on the health of mom and baby, prevention of SIDS-related death, risks of Shaken Baby Syndrome, and safe sleep and car seat safety.
- Birthline has key modules to form a comprehensive learning program as identified in the proposal such as: pregnancy and childbirth, parenting and infant care, home, family and financial stability, general health and wellness, pregnancy options decision-making (parenting vs. adoption), healthy relationships, sexual risk avoidance, and fatherhood.

Per the proposal, Birthline offers classes and services at our facilities on the topics of pre-natal health and nutrition, parenting and baby basics, childbirth education and doula services, as well as other life skills. We also work closely with external agencies to coordinate additional educational opportunities and support. Some of these agencies are County Social Services, Public Health Nurses, Catholic Charities, and Tri-CAP.

Birthline supplies grant-funded necessary items such as pack-n-plays, car seats, diapers, breast feeding supplies, gift cards for gas and groceries, a variety of clothing, and other infant supplies not supported by the grant.

#### **Additions or changes in the program from original application:**

Birthline actively seeks continuous improvement in our programs and services by examining and updating the content of information provided to our clients. For example, Stepping Stones program staff worked collaboratively with a local Public Health Nurse to complete a revision to

our breast feeding educational module to ensure that relevant information is provided to our clients so as to effectively reach the desired outcomes.

Birthline's Relationship Coaching services are growing and class participation is increasing, as Birthline feels confident in its ability to engage clients early in the program. In addition, updated sexual risk avoidance programming and education has been added to the Stepping Stones Program. These services are offered to women and couples who need support identifying healthy relationships. Outcomes include the ability to set personal boundaries within intimate relationships, improve communication skills, resolve conflict, understand differences in love versus infatuation, and examine codependency within relationships.

Birthline has seen increased client acuity and engagement, yet have also witnessed greater client needs, which supports Birthline's desire to add Life Coaching to the Stepping Stones Program. The outcomes of this additional programming and learning will support personal and family sustainability as it improves parenting skills.

### **Number of clients served per quarter in the 4th year:**

Birthline has demonstrated consistency in the number of clients served per quarter in the 4th year, at 89, 92, 84, and 86 clients respectfully. The trend has maintained that the weather does affect a slight dip in client numbers during the summer months, as evidenced by the 84 clients who were served during the July to September 2015 timeframe.

In addition, another trend noted has been the increase of clients who are being served within our program who are also receiving services at a local residential substance abuse treatment facility. This is noted through the increasing number of women who come in during their second and third trimesters of pregnancy as opposed to their first trimester. Another trend noted is the average age of women appears to be slightly increasing as a majority of clients served fell within the 20-24 or 25-29 demographic.

### **3. Fiscal Review**

- Review of the 2015-16 expenditures spreadsheet sent by Ellen Heit.  
Numbers were in agreement with Birthlines
- Have you revised your 2015-16 budget justification?  
A budget revision was sent in this March and approved.
- Any questions on your completion of the 2014-16 grant and your budget?  
No questions at this time. Birthline projects that they will be able to expense all of their Positive Alternative funding.

### **4. Do you have any questions on the findings from your Financial Reconciliation?**

Minor issues were addressed concerning time cards for staff. A new staffing excel spreadsheet will be provided to PA grantees for the new grant cycle to efficiently record staffing time studies and PA hours.

### **5. Grant Closeout Form**

- You will have an opportunity to review a draft of the Grant Closeout Form.

**6. 2015-16 Evaluation - Due June 10th**

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Plan will be discussed. Any suggestions provided in your 2013-14 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing the same evaluation.

Safe sleep is the topic for this year's evaluation study. A series of questions developed as both pre and post-test will be used along with live demonstrations of a safe sleep environment for each client.

- Any questions on the expectations of the report or your organization's evaluation plan for 2015-16?

**7. Positive Alternatives website**

- The PA website will be reconfigured once contracts are all signed.
- Resources for grantees will remain basically the same.
- WRTK booklet revisions have not yet been completed.

Updates on the website and WRTK booklet will be completed for the PA program soon.

**8. Grant Manager Updates**

Updates were given on the new yearly budget vs. previous 2 year PA grant cycles. PA policies are in the process of being revised and updated. Most PA policies will be completed and distributed at the beginning of the new grant. Director Training for the new grant cycle will be offered as a webinar on Thursday, July 14 in the morning. More information will be sent soon.

**9. Issues specific to this grantee**

A new Executive Director has recently been hired. We talked about the transition. All other staff will remain the same and the expected transition should be smooth.

**10. Facility**

- If your facility has been remodeled or updated please give an update. Do you have any plans to move your organization to another building in the near future?  
Birthline's lease will expire this fall. The organization will conduct due diligence in exploring the possibility of leasing a more appropriate building site. They would be looking for a space on the bus line and closer to their underserved populations.
- If grant-funded activity areas have been significantly altered, be prepared to discuss.

**11. Health Equity** is a priority goal at the Minnesota Department of Health. How is your organization addressing this need?

Birthline has made it a priority to address the unaddressed needs of the immigrant population that has grown substantially in the St. Cloud area recently. They need to market to these groups so that they are fully aware of their services.

**12. What are the new unaddressed needs** in the communities you serve?

Many more clients are being seen that have increased risky behaviors. Programming needs to be expanded to meet this growing need.

- Do you have a well-developed and up-to-date list of community partners available?

Birthline is well connected in the community and has a well-developed list of community partners. They belong to an established group of 50 agencies that support efforts in parenting and pregnancy education in the St. Cloud area.

- Are you able to make warm referrals to any of these partners?  
Yes, through their connections with their community agencies they are able to connect clients to community partners they know and trust.

**13. Clients stories** (along with client data collection) are an important component of the work we do. Client stories fill in the gaps that data can't detail and humanize the efforts made by all grantees.

- **Have you submitted your PA funded client stories yet?**  
Yes, thank you!

**14. How can MDH be more supportive of your program?**

More webinar trainings offered on pertinent topics for PA grantees would be appreciated.

**15. Other?**

Birthline has a well-developed model pregnancy and parenting education program that has been continually adapted to meet the needs of their changing clientele. It has been a pleasure to work with their current outgoing Executive Director. We thank you for your years of services for the women in unplanned and crisis pregnancies in the St. Cloud area.

**Site Visit Date: May 20, 2016**

**Center: Birthline**

**Grantee Staff: Carrie Tripp**

**Positive Alternatives Grant Manager: Mary Ottman**